

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This is in full and timely response to the Office Action dated March 31, 2005. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections made in the Office Action based on the above amendments and the following remarks.

Status of Claims

By this Amendment, claim 2 has been cancelled, and claims 1, 11 and 21 have been amended. Claims 1 and 3 to 21 remain pending for the Examiner's consideration. Claims 12 to 15 and 19 to 21 have been allowed by the Examiner.

On page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner stated that claims 2 to 6, 10 and 11 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, the allowable subject matter of claim 2 has been incorporated into independent claim 1 to place claim 1 into condition for allowance, and claim 2 has been canceled. Claims 3 to 11, all of which depend directly or indirectly upon claim 1, are now believed to be in clear condition for allowance.

Rejection of Claims 1 and 7 to 9

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Morris (U.S. Patent No. 4,416,460). Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Morris. Claims 8 and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C.

§103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Morris in view of Bauer et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,199,442).

As noted above, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of original claim 2. Claims 7 to 9 depend upon claim 1 and are patentable for at least the same reason as claim 1. Accordingly, the Examiner's rejections of claims 1 and 7 to 9 are all overcome by the present amendment to claim 1. Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections of claims 1 and 7 to 9 are respectfully requested.

Withdrawn Claims 16 to 18

Claims 16 to 18 were withdrawn from consideration in the previous Office Action as being drawn to nonelected species of the invention. However, the Applicant notes that claims 16 to 18 depend upon allowable generic claim 12. As stated by the Examiner on page 2 of the previous Office Action, the Applicant is entitled to consideration of these withdrawn claims 16 to 18 upon the allowance of a generic base claim. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to consider the merits of claims 16 to 18 and to allow these claims for at least the reason that they depend upon the allowable generic base claim 12.

Other Amendments

Claims 11 and 21, which depend upon allowable claims 1 and 19, respectively, have each been amended to remove certain extraneous limitations. Specifically, claim 11 has been amended so as not to be limited to a sliding member that slides along a circumferential path. It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the sliding member could also slide along an

axial path that intersects the longitudinal axes of the flexible stops. In this case, the “rows” of flexible stops would extend in a circumferential direction relative to the first rotating member, instead of parallel to the axis of rotation of the first rotating member. Similarly, claim 21 has been amended so as not to be limited to rows of flexible stops arranged parallel to the axis of rotation of the first rotating member.

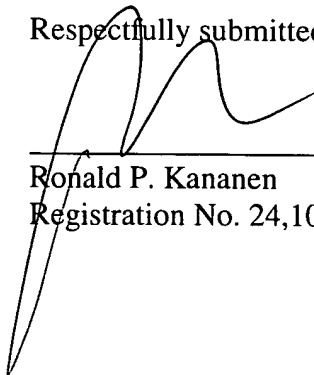
Conclusion

For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the pending claims 1 and 3 to 21 in this Application are now in condition for allowance. The Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance now be issued for this application.

If the Examiner has any comments or suggestions that could place this application into even better form, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the Applicant’s undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

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Respectfully submitted by:



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